



Robert L. Edwards

October 24, 1957 - January 17, 2018

A community can never afford to lose an artist, or a scholar, a builder, or a gardener, a creator, or a nurturer – someone of such genuine good will that they make the community a better place because of the contributions they’ve made. But we’ve lost one man who was all that, and more. Michigan native and long-time Royal Oak resident Robert Edwards died suddenly Wednesday, January 17, at age 60.

Robert was first and foremost a visual, and visionary, artist who earned a degree in Fine Arts from the Center for Creative Studies (CCS) in Detroit. His paintings received favorable reviews in Art News and in local Detroit media. His eye for aesthetic excellence led him to a lifetime of collecting art and design, beginning with original comic book art as a child. Robert’s collections included vintage movie posters, paintings and prints, and mid-century furniture. His most recent passion was automotive concept design art. He amassed one of the most comprehensive collections of automobile art in the country and became one of the leading experts in the field. At the time of his death, Robert was working on a film, “American Dreaming,” chronicling the classic automotive designs of mid-20th Century Detroit, and honoring the automotive designers of that Golden Era.

Robert and his loving wife Julie were devoted to each other and together they operated successful businesses in design, graphic arts and commercial

printing, estate sales, and real estate management. The couple was a frequent and contributing presence in Royal Oak and Detroit, in efforts to promote economic development, the arts, and design.

Robert also was an avid enthusiast for architecture, American and foreign cinema (horror films in particular) and literature, especially James Joyce and Vladimir Nabokov. Like Nabokov, he was a lepidopterist who studied and raised butterflies. He was one of the few humans who read James Joyce's "Finnegans Wake" out-loud (over a two-year period).

He worked as a docent at the Detroit Institute of Arts and was a member of the Detroit Scarab Club. He also was a Master Gardener who volunteered his horticultural skills at the Detroit Zoological Society for many years. Robert also served five years on the CCS Alumna Board. He was a widely known source of expertise on the Mid-Century Modern Design movement and the city of Detroit's role in the movement's evolution. For the past 20 years, Robert and colleague Robert Mirek, a fellow Detroit artist, also held a weekly salon attended by several Detroit area artists, writers, designers and educators.

Robert's generous involvement in the lives of his friends and family toward their growth and success is immeasurable. Despite his modesty, many individuals express their gratitude for the time and patience he shared with them.

He was a builder, a gardener, a creator, and a scholar; a loving spouse, brother, uncle, and friend. His memory was exceptional and his expertise encyclopedic. He quietly conveyed his passion for any subject at hand, enriching the lives of everyone who knew him.

In addition to his wife and partner, Julie Hyde-Edwards, Robert is survived by siblings, Darrell (Jackie), Ted, Bill (Maggie), Susan, John (Arlene), Tim

(Bonnie) and Rhonda; sister-in-law, Pam; and many nieces and nephews. Predeceased by his parents, Sally (Ritchie) and Bill of Perry County, KY; and siblings, Roy, Mary, Larry and Jake and many nieces and nephews.

Memorial service Sunday, February 25, 2018, from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. at the Detroit Institute of Arts - Lecture Hall, 5200 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, MI 48202.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

FEB **25**. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Detroit Institute of Arts - Lecture Hall
5200 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, MI 48202

Tribute Wall

BB

“ Dear Julie,

American Dreaming is a monumental tribute to the designers of the Golden Era and a testimony to Robert's selfless passion to gain them the recognition they so deserved.

On behalf of the Charles Balogh family, we are truly grateful for the few years we had getting to know Robert. The pure joy and enthusiasm he expressed upon discovering Dad's work during our first meeting in 2015 will always be treasured. The Lawrence Tech, Royal Oak Historical Society and Scarab Club exhibits along with the media coverage were a true joy to witness.

We hope you find comfort in knowing that the many lives Robert touched will forever be changed because of his kindness and empathy for others.

*With love,
Joan, Beth, Karen, Nancy & Paul*

Beth Balogh - January 28, 2018 at 03:37 PM

DS

“ *May the loving care of family and friends
Give you strength to help you through your sorrow,
Love Vince and Dolly*

Dolly Sanders - January 25, 2018 at 12:28 PM

JU

Dolly, You have no idea how much Robert Edwards admired you and Vince. We have so many warm memories of you two at events. (some great photos too!) Your support for his American Dreaming project was something he counted on.

He respected the talent of all the automotive designers and he connected with them as artists -- because he was an artist.

Let's stay in touch.

Warmly,

Julie Hyde-Edwards

Julie - January 25, 2018 at 09:37 PM

LD

“ I am absolutely devastated to read the very sad news about Robert Edwards passing. After sitting in a stupor for ten minutes, I called him hoping this report was a mistake ...but Julie answered to confirm this incredibly unhappy news.

I first met Robert years ago in person at the Mitchell-Bentley auction in Owosso and then again at an automotive designer's festival/event he held at Lawrence Tech campus in Michigan. Since then we have stayed in close touch and exchanged information and introductions. He was a real saint of a guy and a pioneer in the relatively new realm of collecting and saving original automotive design art. Robert really defined the collectibility of this fabulous art that was once being regularly tossed out. And he brought designer names formerly unknown to most people into a realm of honor and recognition.

This past year we both appeared at the fabulous “Cars As Art” festival in northern Michigan. Here Robert presented me with a framed piece of art made up in the 1950s by a graphic artist from Creative Industries of Detroit for Creative GM Rex Terry. Mr. Terry originally gave this framed art piece to Don Mitchell of Mitchell-Bentley back in the early 1950s in comical tribute to an expensive hunting dog that Don had (the dog refused to hunt). The frame has a brass plate on it that states it was originally given to Don Mitchell by Rex Terry. I have that art hanging on my wall today. I'm attaching a photo I took of Robert at Cars As Art last year.

Robert was a fine gentleman... gracious, kind, soft spoken and incredibly knowledgeable about automotive design and designers from Detroit's Golden Era. He was very sophisticated, yet very down to earth and easily approachable. I have photos of us talking together and I can assure you that the conversations were always interesting. Robert could rattle off names and dates with his photographic memory. And his passion for automotive design was absolutely boundless. I've met a lot of people in the car biz, but never met anyone more enthusiastic and devoted to automotive

design and the great people in Detroit who turned out these amazing works, including those who labored anonymously behind the scenes. A kindred spirit.

He was most recently helping me to find David Scott (who has also passed) in reference to the book I'm writing on Mr. Scott's Plainsman concept car.

I can only hope and pray that Robert's ambitious, incredible work on "American Dreaming" is somehow continued and completed. His passing only doubles the importance of seeing this fabulous work completed. Perhaps even now Robert is sitting back and talking with the great designers up there in automotive heaven. He was a great friend and I'm lucky to have even known him.



Leon Dixon - January 22, 2018 at 12:23 AM

DS

“ Julie, my heartfelt condolences on Robert's passing.

I only met him a few short months ago during his research for his automotive concept design project. He poured over the many sketches and illustrations I had kept from my Dad's years at Chrysler Design. Robert truly had a passion for his work.

He was a man I would have liked to have gotten to know better. I will miss that lost opportunity.

Sincerely, Dave Scott

Dave Scott - January 21, 2018 at 04:50 PM



Thank you Dave. I am awaiting arrangements from the DAC so you and your family can see your father's work in Robert's last exhibition of automotive concept art.

Julie Hyde-Edwards - January 24, 2018 at 11:53 PM

RL

“ *Bob was truly and extraordinary person. There are many in the vintage, automotive art community that will mourn his passing.*

I will never forget his enthusiasm and hard work to get all the details correct when he curated an art exhibit for us at the Packard Proving Grounds. He was a pleasure to work with. May he rest in peace.

Julie, we pray for Robert and hope our heartfelt condolences will help you through this difficult time.

Sincerely, Roger & Joan Luksik

Roger Luksik - January 21, 2018 at 12:20 PM



Thank you Roger.

Julie Hyde-Edwards - January 24, 2018 at 11:55 PM



Julie, we are so saddened by Roberts passing. We were enjoying this new friendship and looked forward to its growth in years to come. His and your assistance in staging the Cars as Art exhibit was immeasurable in making it a successful tribute to the designers he has perservered to recognize. We hope your awareness of the wonderful impact he had on so many people will bring you comfort in these difficult days. With love, Keith and Sherry

Keith Ashley - January 26, 2018 at 10:53 AM

JS

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



John Sauve - January 21, 2018 at 11:52 AM

TO

great car stuff

tom - June 14, 2022 at 10:18 AM

CF

“ Robert’s quiet intelligence, discerning eye and passion for sharing extraordinary art will most certainly leave a hole in the lives of those who knew him. But maybe even more importantly, he was a kind and gentle man - a lovely human being who left us much too soon. Our hearts go out to Julie and those that knew and loved him.

Cathy and Joe Fischl - January 21, 2018 at 11:35 AM



Thank you Cathy.

Julie Hyde-Edwards - January 24, 2018 at 11:56 PM

RB

“ Robert was a wonderful kind and caring man. He taught us so much about the art world. We will miss him. Our hearts go out to you Julie.
Randy & Pat Burean

Randy & Pat Burean - January 21, 2018 at 10:37 AM



Pat and Randy - he appreciated you two so much. Thank you for your support.

Julie Hyde-Edwards - January 24, 2018 at 11:57 PM

JU

“ 1 file added to the album Robert Edwards photos from Julie Hyde-Edwards



Julie - January 21, 2018 at 08:55 AM

JU

Robert always shunned the spotlight - giving it to the automotive designers whom he felt were most worthy.

Julie - January 25, 2018 at 09:39 PM

RH

“ We are very happy to have known Robert and we will miss him. He was a fine artist, Scholar, and incredible human being. Our thoughts are with you Julie. We know he was as proud of you as you are of him.

Robert and Beth

robert Hyde - January 20, 2018 at 11:20 PM

DM

“ Robert was such a good kind man. His presence and beautiful smile will be greatly missed by many.

Denise Michalak - January 20, 2018 at 06:56 PM

JR

It is with great sadness that I miss Robert. He was a very dedicated professional who loved Sharing automotive history with everyone Marguerite and John

John Rastall - January 24, 2018 at 02:05 PM

 Julie Hyde-Edwards

Marguerite and John, so happy to know you. Your contributions to the Chrome, Fins & Style exhibition were terrific. Thank you for your kind words.

Julie Hyde-Edwards - January 24, 2018 at 11:59 PM

SM

I just learned of Robert's passing last night. My husband, Jim and I are so shocked and saddened by this news. We had just gotten to know Robert last year when I accidentally came across information about his film, American Dreaming, online. I notified him last February to tell him how excited we were about the film. I had also told him that my father, George Barbaz, was an automobile designer and had just recently passed away in November 2016. He was very familiar with my dad's work and invited us to visit his studio so he could see some of his drawings. We met at Robert's studio on a couple of occasions throughout the year and I was so impressed with his knowledge and true appreciation of all of these wonderful car designers of that era. Robert was a very kind and humble man and I'm so glad that we had a chance to meet him. He will surely be missed and we do hope that somehow his work will be able to be completed for all to see.

Sincere condolences to Robert's family.

Sandra & Jim McCusker

Sandra & James McCusker - February 12, 2018 at 09:24 PM